final! I cannot marry—you, or any one. I—I have promised. I am not free."

"Nothing in the world is final," returned Hemingway sharply, "except death." He raised his hat and, as though to leave her, moved away. He felt that for the present to continue might lose him the chance to fight again. But, to deliver an ultimatum, he turned back.

"As long as you are alive, and I am alive," he told her, "all things are possible. I didn't give up hope. I don't give up you."

The girl exclaimed with a gesture of despair:

"You won't understand that I am speaking the truth. You are right that things can change the future, but nothing can change the past. Can't you understand that?"

"What do I care for the past?" cried the young man scornfully. "I know only one thing—two things; that I love you and that, until you love me, I am going to make your life hell!"

For an instant she let him clasp her hands in both of his.

Something in her face caused his heart to leap. But he was too wise to speak.

"She is engaged to Fearing!" he told himself. "She has promised to marry Fearing! She thinks that it is too late to consider another man!" The prospect of a fight for the woman he loved thrilled him greatly.

HEMINGWAY at the sunset hour betook himself to the Consulate. At that hour it had become his custom to visit his fellow countryman and with him share the gossip of the day and such a cocktail as only a fellow countryman could compose. Later he was to dine at the house of the Ivory Company and, as his heart never ceased telling him, Mrs. Adair also was to be present.

"It will be a very pleasant party," said Harris. "They gave me a bid, too, but it's steamer day to-morrow and I've got to get my mail ready for the boat. Mrs. Adair is to be there."

Of Mrs. Adair, Harris always spoke with reverent enthusiasm, and the man who loved her delighted to listen. But this time Harris disappointed him.

"And Fearing, too," he added.

The conjunction of the two names surprised Hemingway, but he made no sign.

Harris began to pace the room.

"There's no one," he complained suddenly, "so popularly unpopular as the man who butts in. I know that, but still I've always taken his side. I've always been for him." He halted and frowned down upon his guest.

"Suppose," he began aggressively, "I see a man driving his car over a cliff. If I tell him that road will take him over a cliff, the worst that can happen to me is to be told to mind my own business, and I can always answer back, 'I was only trying to help you.' If I don't speak, the man breaks his neck. Between the two, it seems to me, sooner than have any one's life on my hands, I'd rather be told to mind my business."

Hemingway's expression was distinctly disapproving, but, undismayed, the Consul continued:

"Now, we all know that this morning you gave that polo pony to Lady Firth, and one of us guesses that you first offered it to some one else, who refused it. One of us thinks that very soon, to-morrow, or even to-night, you may offer that same person something worth more than a polo pony, and that if she refuses that it is going to hurt you for the rest of your life."

HEMINGWAY shot at his friend a glance of warning. In haste, Harris continued:

"I know," he protested, answering the look, "I know that this is where Mr. Buttinsky is told to mind his business. But I'm going right on. I'm going to state a theory, and let you draw your own deductions."

He slid into a chair, and across the table fastened his eyes on those of his friend. Undismayed, but with a wry smile of dislike, Hemingway stared fixedly back at him.

"What," remanded Harris, "is the first rule in detective work?"

Hemingway let the Consul answer his own question.

"It is to follow the woman," declared Harris. "And, accordingly, what should be the first precaution of a man making his getaway? To see that the woman does not follow. But suppose we are dealing with a fugitive of especial intelligence, with a criminal who has imagination and brains? He might fix it so that the woman could follow him; he might plan it so that no one would suspect. She might arrive at his hiding place only after many months, only after each had made separately a long circuit of the globe, only after a journey with a plausible and legitimate object. And, as strangers under the eyes of others, they would become acquainted, would gradually grow more friendly, until at last people would say: 'Those two mean to make a match of it.' And then, one day, openly, in the sight of all men, with the aid of the law and the church, they would resume those relations that existed before the man ran away and the woman followed."

There was a short silence.

Hemingway broke it in a tone that would accept no denial.

"You can't talk like that to me," he cried. "What do you mean?"

The Consul regarded him with grave solicitude. His look was one of real affection, and, although his tone held the absolute finality of the family physician who delivers a sentence of death, he spoke with gentleness and regret.

"I mean," he said, "that Mrs. Adair is not a widow; that the man she speaks of as her late husband is Fearing!"

Hemingway tried to adjust his mind to the calamity. But his mind refused.

FROM the harbor Hemingway heard the raucous whistle of the liner signalling her entrance.

Hemingway tried to urge himself to believe there had been some hideous, absurd error. But in answer came back to him phrases the girl had last addressed to him: "You can command the future, but you cannot change the past. I cannot marry you, or any one! I am not free!"

And then to comfort himself he called up the look he had surprised in her eyes when he stood holding her hands in his. He clung to it as a drowning man will clutch even at a piece of floating seaweed.

In a voice strange to him he heard himself saying: "Why do you think that? You've got to tell me. This morning I asked Mrs. Adair to marry me."

The Consul exclaimed in dismay: "I thought I was in time. I ought to have told you days before, but"——

"Tell me now," commanded Hemingway.

"I know it in a thousand ways," began Harris. "But to convince you," he went on, "I need tell you only one. I see I've got to show you. It's kindest, after all, to cut quick." He leaned further forward and his voice dropped. Speaking quickly, he said:

"Last summer I lived in a bungalow on the Pearl Road. Fearing's house was next to mine. This was before Mrs. Adair went to live at the agency, and while she was alone in another bungalow further down the road. I was ill that summer; I couldn't sleep. I used to sit all night on my veranda and pray for the sun to rise. No one could see me, but I could see the veranda of Fearing's house and into his garden. And night after night I saw Mrs. Adair creep out of Fearing's house, saw him walk with her to the gate, saw him in the shadow of the bushes take her in his arms, and saw them kiss. No one knows that but you and I, and," he cried defiantly, "it is impossible for us to believe ill of Polly Adair."

Hemingway rose and slowly and heavily moved toward the door. "I will not trouble them any more," he added. "I'll leave at sunrise on that boat."

IN the doorway Hemingway halted and turned back. "Why," he asked dully, "do you think Fearing is a fugitive? Not that it matters to her, since she loves him, or that it matters to me. Only I want her to have only the best."

Again the Consul moved unhappily.

"I oughtn't to tell you," he protested, "and if I do I ought to tell the State Department and a detective agency first. They want him, or a man like him." His voice dropped to a whisper. "The man wanted is Henry Brownell, a cashier of a bank in Waltham, Mass., thirty-five years of age, smooth-shaven, college-bred, speaking with a marked New England accent, and—and with other marks that fit Fearing like the cover on a book. They are positive he is on the coast of Africa. I put them off. I wasn't sure."

"You've been protecting them," said Hemingway.

"I wasn't sure," reiterated Harris. "And if I were, the Pinkertons can do their own sleuthing. The man's living honestly now, anyway, isn't he?" he demanded, "and she loves him. Why should I punish her?"

His tone seemed to challenge and upbraid.

"Good God!" cried the other, "I'm not blaming you! I'd be proud of the chance to do as much. I asked because I'd like to go away thinking she's content, thinking she's happy with him."

"Doesn't it look as though she were?" Harris protested. "She's followed him half around the globe. If she'd been happier away from him, she'd have stayed away from him."

So intent had been the men upon their talk that neither had noted the passing of the minutes or that the mail steamer had distributed her mail and passengers; and when a servant entered bearing lamps, and from the office the Consul's clerk appeared with a bundle of letters from the steamer, both were taken by surprise.

"So late?" exclaimed Hemingway. "I must go. If I'm to sail at daybreak, I've little time!"

AS he advanced toward Harris with his hand outstretched in adieu, the face of the Consul halted him. With the letters, the clerk had placed upon the table a visiting-card, and the Consul stared at it in fascination. Moving stiffly, he turned it so that Hemingway could see. On it Hemingway read, "George S. Sheyer," and, on a lower line, "Representing the Pinkerton Agency."

Hemingway, with a groan of dismay, exclaimed aloud:

"It is the end!"

From the darkness of the outer office a man stepped softly into the circle of the lamp.

"It is the end?" he repeated inquiringly. He spoke the phrase with peculiar emphasis. His voice was cool, alert, authoritative. "The end of what?" he demanded sharply.

In the silence the detective moved into the light. He was tall and strongly built, his face was shrewd and intelligent.

"Which of you is the Consul?" he asked. But he did not take his eyes from Hemingway.

"I am the Consul," said Harris. But still the detective did not turn from Hemingway.

"Why," he asked, "did this gentleman, when he read my card, say, 'It is the end?' The end of what? Has anything been going on here that came to an end when he saw my card?"

Harris saw his friend slowly retreat, slowly crumple up into a chair, slowly raise his hands to cover his face. As though in a nightmare, he heard him saying savagely:

"It is the end of two years of hell. It is the end of two years of fear and agony! Now I shall have peace. Now I shall sleep! I thank God you've come! I thank God I can go back!"

Harris sprang between the two men.

"What does this mean?" he commanded.

Hemingway raised his eyes and surveyed him steadily.

"It means," he said, "that I have deceived you, Harris—that I am the man you told me of, I am the man they want." He turned to the officer.

"I fooled him for four months," he said. "I couldn't fool you for five minutes."

The eyes of the detective danced with sudden triumph. He shot an eager glance from Hemingway to the Consul.

"This man," he demanded, "who is he?"

With an impatient gesture Hemingway signified Harris.

"He doesn't know who I am," he said. "He knows me as Hemingway. I am Henry Brownell of Waltham, Mass." Again his face sank into the palms of his hands. "And I'm tired—tired," he moaned. "I am sick of not knowing, sick of running away. I give myself up."

The detective breathed a sigh of relief that seemed to issue from his soul.

"My God," he sighed, "you've given me a long chase! I've had eleven months of you, and I'm as sick of this as you are." He recovered himself sharply. As though reciting an incantation, he addressed Hemingway in crisp, emotionless notes.

"Henry Brownell!" he chanted, "I arrest you in the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the robbery of the Waltham Title and Trust Company. I understand," he added, "you waive extradition and return with me of your own free will?"

With his face still in his hands, Hemingway murmured assent. The detective stepped briskly and uninvited to the table and seated himself.

"I want to send a message home, Mr. Consul," he said. "May I use your cable blanks?"

INSIDE the skull of Wilbur Harris of Iowa, U. S. A., American Consul to Zanzibar, East Africa, there was going forward a mighty struggle that was not fit to put into words.

What was his own duty he could not determine. That of Hemingway he knew nothing, he could truthfully testify. And if now Hemingway claimed to be Henry Brownell, he had no certain knowledge to the contrary. He foresaw that his friend need only send a wireless from Nantucket and at the wharf witnesses would swarm to establish his identity and make it evident the detective had blundered. And in the meanwhile Brownell and his wife, in some settlement still further removed from observation, would for the second time have fortified themselves against pursuit and capture. He saw the eyes of Hemingway fixed upon him in appeal and warning.

The brisk voice of the detective broke the silence.

"You will testify, if need be, Mr. Consul," he said, "that you heard the prisoner admit he was Henry Brownell and that he surrendered himself of his own free will?"

For an instant the Consul hesitated, then he nodded stiffly.

"I heard him," he said.

THREE hours later, at 10 o'clock of the same evening, the detective and Hemingway leaned together on the steamship's rail.

"You are sure," Hemingway said, "you told no one?"

"No one," the detective answered. "Of course your hotel proprietor knows you're sailing, but he doesn't know why. And, by sunrise, we'll be well out at sea."

The words caught Hemingway by the throat. He had seen her for the last time; that morning for the last time had looked into her eyes, had held her hands in his. With a pain that seemed impossible to support, he turned his back upon Zanzibar and all it meant to him. And, as he turned, he faced, coming toward him, across the moonlit deck, Fearing.

With a polite but authoritative gesture Fearing turned to the detective. "I have something to say to this gentleman before he sails," he said; "would you kindly stand over there?"

Turning his back upon the detective, and facing Hemingway, Fearing began abruptly. His voice was sunk to a whisper, but he spoke without the slightest sign of trepidation.

"Two years ago, when I was indicted," he whispered, "and ran away, Polly paid back half of the sum I stole. That left her without a penny; that's why she took to this typewriting. Since then, I have paid back nearly all the rest. But Polly was not satisfied. She wanted me to take my punishment and start fresh. She knew they were watching her so she couldn't write this to me, but she came to me by a roundabout way. And all the time she's been here, she's been begging me to go back and give myself up. I couldn't see it. I knew in a few months I'd have paid back all I took, and I thought that was enough. But she said I must take my medicine in our own country, and start square with a clean slate. She's done a lot for me, and whether I'd have done that for her or not, I don't know. But now, I must! What you did to-night to save me, leaves me no choice. So, I'll sail"——

With an exclamation of anger Hemingway caught the other by the shoulder and dragged him closer.

"To save you!" he whispered. "I didn't do it for you. I did it that you both could escape together, to give you time"——

"But I tell you," protested Fearing, "she doesn't want me to escape. And maybe she's right. Any way, we're sailing with you at"——

"We?" whispered Hemingway, steadying his voice. "Then—then your wife is going with you?"

"My wife!" Fearing exclaimed. "I haven't got a wife! If you mean Polly—Mrs. Adair—she is my sister! And she wants to thank you. She's below"——

Hemingway flung him to one side and was racing down the deck.

The detective sprang in pursuit.

"One moment, there!" he shouted.

But the alert, bronzed young man barred his way.

In the moonlight the detective saw that he was smiling.

"That's all right," said Fearing. "He'll be back in a minute. Besides, you don't want him. I'm the man you want."